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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON THE SHI'A "INTIFADA" IN  
IRAQ

#### Summary

-- Lead story in all papers today, April 6, highlights developments on the Iraqi front and the escalating tensions in Shiite areas of Iraq. Majority of commentaries talk about these events, anticipating a "hot summer" for the "occupation" forces in Iraq.

#### Editorial Commentary

-- "The soldiers of God and the soldiers of the devil"

Columnist Khaled Mahadin writes on the op-ed page of semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai (04/06): "When the Americans and the British started their unjust war on war a year ago, their planes, their tanks and their missiles did not differentiate between Sunnis and Shiites, between Arabs and Kurds, or between Christians, Muslims, Turks and Assyrians. It was a war of racist extermination that targeted all Iraqis.. And when the grudging colonialists invaded Baghdad, they started another war against Iraq's Arabism, Islam and history, during which they deluded themselves into thinking that the one with the power of death can impose the results and the reality that one wants. All that until the Iraqi national resistance started its counter war against the invasion and the occupation, determined to liberate Iraqis and Iraq from humiliation and degradation. Two days ago, a new chapter of the Iraqi popular liberation war started, where it is no longer possible to talk about a Sunni triangle or rectangle, for the scope of the resistance has widened to include all of the Iraqi territory from the east to the west and from the north to the south.. The call for self-restraint that some people are addressing to the Iraqis is false and malignant and is in conspiracy against Iraq and its people. Instead of calling on the forces of invasion and occupation to respect the Iraqi people's religion, mosques, dignity, life and rights, these people address such calls to the Iraqis, calls that feed right into the lap of the occupiers' interests and works against the Iraqis' right to resistance and their duty to fight back those who fight them. And here meets the will to fight in Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq against the invasion and the occupation and against the extermination being exercised by the Americans, the British and the Israelis, as well as against the same racist measures that do not differentiate between Iraqis, Palestinians and Lebanese except in as much as these people reject hegemony, occupation and surrender."

-- "The Shiites' Intifada"

Daily columnist Basem Sakijha writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (04/06): "There lies many a meaning in Muqtada Al-Sadr's response to the American escalation and talk of 'terrorizing the enemy'. The political group of the Shi'a rejected the occupation right from the beginning, but continued to talk of a peaceful expulsion of that occupation. But now, this group developed its scope of action and turned it into violent responses, which means that anticipating a hot summer for the American occupation would be justifiable, particularly with the escalation of the traditional Iraqi resistance that seems to have set the failure of Bush's presidential campaign as its main objective.. What happened the past two days, something that is likely to develop over the next few months, reflects the failure of the Americans in managing Iraq's multi-complex issues and indicates that a hot summer awaits the occupation forces."

-- "A blazing hot summer awaits Iraq"

Daily columnist Urayb Rintawi writes on the op-ed page

of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (04/06): "America's defeat in Iraq is internationally forbidden and America's victory in Iraq is undesired by most countries of the world and the region. On the regional level, half the countries surrounding Iraq find no interest of theirs to see the success of the American project in Iraq, not for any reason other than that it would mean that they would become the next targets of the campaign of the Christian right-wing and the neo-conservatives in the White House and the Pentagon. On the international level, many European and Asian countries brace themselves for that day when Washington unilaterally holds the reins of power and world markets, as it holds the reins of military superiority today. Yet, the alternative to the American project in Iraq seems so scary, in fact terrifying. For many of the countries surrounding Iraq and for many European and Arab countries, the resistance in Iraq remains without identity, program or vision and is stamped, at the least from the point of view of the media, with an extremist fundamentalist-Salafi-Wahabi aspect.. Between these two projects on the extremes lies a potential third project that is based on rejecting the occupation and the legitimate resistance to it - some of the resistance in Iraq is illegitimate, incomprehensible, and even criminal - on the one hand, and on presenting a vision for the future of Iraq founded on democratic rules, respect for human rights, modernization and peaceful approach, on the other. That is why we find that some countries, like Iran, Saudi and Syria, are reassured by Washington's dilemma in Iraq. In fact, some of them are settling scores with the United States through Iraq. This escalating tension among the Iraqis, Sunnis and Shiites, on the one hand and the American occupation on the other is but an expression of this tense relationship between the Iraqi neighbors and Iraq's occupiers. It is very likely that a hot summer awaits Iraq and the Iraqis."

GNEHM